



MEMO



N O R T H C A R O L I N A D I V I S I O N O F
E M E R G E N C Y M A N A G E M E N T

Federal Funds Offered for Flood Fixes

North Carolina Emergency Management has a solution for communities plagued by recurring flooding problems: apply for federal flood mitigation funding.

Each year, the Flood Mitigation Assistance program helps fund cost-effective measures that reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program, or NFIP. Communities can use the funds to acquire the flood-prone property and convert the land for open space uses in perpetuity, relocate buildings out of the flood plain, elevate structures, and in some cases, flood proof non-residential structures. Any local or tribal government who is in compliance with NFIP can apply through NCEM for the federal funds.

“If a community has recurring flooding, we want them to know we have a way to fix the problem permanently,” said Chris Crew, NCEM Hazard Mitigation Chief.



Crews demolish apartments in Charlotte, N.C.

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The Flood Mitigation Assistance program is one of FEMA’s four non-disaster mitigation grant programs designed to eliminate -or at least minimize- flood risk to people and property. Created as part of the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994, the Flood Mitigation Assistance program offers the least restrictive grants available to address structures that are damaged repeatedly.

To qualify for Flood Mitigation Assistance funds, structures must be NFIP insured and must have had two or more paid flood losses of more than \$1,000 each in any 10-year period since 1978. While federal funds will cover 75 percent of the project costs, a 25 percent non-federal match is required. For severe repetitive loss properties, the federal funding share can increase to 90 percent. Program grants also can be used to update a community’s flood mitigation plans.

Since 1996, the NCEM Hazard Mitigation Section has worked with Beaufort and Mecklenburg counties and the towns of Belhaven, Boone and Chapel Hill to acquire 20 properties and elevate nine structures. Nearly \$11 million in Flood Mitigation Assistance funds has been used to mitigate a total of 48 high-risk repetitive flood loss properties.

Charlotte’s Success

The Doral Apartments complex in Charlotte had such a long history of recurring flooding that city officials referred to the 128-unit property as “Charlotte’s worst flood hazard.” Located near downtown within the Briar Creek floodplain, the apartments often experienced flash flooding. The Doral Apartments incurred flood damage following heavy rainfall in 1995, 1997, 2003 and 2008. According to the National Flood Insurance Program, the complex had more than \$4.1 million in flood insurance claims prior to 2007. The 2008 event, by itself, resulted in a claim of nearly \$2.9 million.

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Flood Fixes continued

The city of Charlotte worked with NCEM in 2009 to apply for Flood Mitigation Assistance funds. The funds they received enabled the city to acquire and demolish the Doral Apartment complex. Once complete, this \$4.7 million project will mitigate one of the city's most serious repetitive loss situations.

Similarly, apartments along Reese Road in Mecklenburg County also were plagued with damage from persistent flooding. In 2004, Mecklenburg County applied for and received \$433,000 to purchase the property and turn it into open space.

“Counties that have recurring flooding problems should call us now,” said Crew. “We can help them determine what may qualify for funding and what may not.”

Once FEMA publishes the 2010 funding cycle, NCEM will ask local governments to submit letters of interest for hazard mitigation grant programs.

For more information about hazard mitigation grants, contact Chris Crew, State Hazard Mitigation Officer at 919-715-8000 ext. 277 or jcrew@ncem.org



Before (above) and after of the Reese Road Project in Mecklenburg county funded under the FMA 2004.



Special Needs Registry Board Added to WebEOC

A special needs registry board has been added in WebEOC to enable counties to better identify their vulnerable populations before disaster strikes and plan in advance for their care.

Vulnerable populations usually are individuals who have limited mobility or who need advanced supplies. Elderly citizens or people with disabilities often fall into this category. During an emergency, the safety of those with special needs may be determined by their county leaders. This registry board will help county emergency management officials evaluate and prioritize resources to meet the needs of their most vulnerable citizens.

While some counties may already have some type of a special needs registry, the new WebEOC board offers a centralized location for all counties to store and access information during an event. Since counties already log into WebEOC to manage emergency operations, creating or merging their existing special needs databases in one secure location should make the information more easily accessible. For counties who don't currently have a special needs registry, the new board provides the necessary infrastructure for vital information.

County participation in the new data board is strictly voluntary. The boards simply offer additional support to what counties are already doing to support their vulnerable populations.

NCEM provides some supporting documents including a special needs registry application form and a health information authorization release for county residents, and a letter from NCEM Director Doug Hoell encouraging all to take advantage of this new resource. The counties are responsible for requesting, inputting, storing and updating the registry information, as well as maintaining their own password for the database.

The information is stored securely on the WebEOC servers. State officials have access only to total numbers such how many residents use life supporting equipment or the number of people requiring wheelchairs. The counties view and control everything else about the registry.

For more information, contact Darlene Johnson at 919-733-3890 or djohnson@ncem.org.

Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Teams Train With Chief

Nearly 80 first responders, emergency management officials and National Guardsmen from more than a dozen agencies around the state spent two days in February practicing how to rescue survivors swept away by swollen streams, trapped by rising flood waters or injured and isolated on a mountain side. Collectively known as the North Carolina HART team (for Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team), the group is frequently called upon to rescue those whom no other group can reach.

Last month, that included the N.C. Crime Control and Public Safety Chief Deputy Secretary Gerald “Rudy” Rudisill. Rudisill volunteered to play one of the survivors the crews rescued from the roof of a flooded building.

“We’re used to working in stressful conditions. When stranded hikers are seriously injured or folks are trapped by rising floodwaters, time is of the essence,” said Tim Denning, N.C. Emergency Management’s state coordinator for the program. “But plucking the department’s chief deputy secretary from a rooftop was a first for us.”

The NC HART teams combine the expertise of local rescue technicians with the training, maintenance and capabilities of the N.C. National Guard Blackhawk Unit based in Salisbury. Each team is comprised of 14 members: two crew leaders, eight rescue technicians (including four HART technicians) and four support staff who handle medical, logistics and communications issues.

Having the helicopter as part of the team’s assets, means we can get the rescue technicians into tight places very quickly, Denning said.

The 28 HART technicians positioned across the state must train, qualify and compete for the coveted spots as members of the elite rescue team. To qualify these first responders must be trained and experienced in swift water rescue. They then must pass a stringent physical fitness test and an intensive 80-hour course that teaches them how to rescue injured people from the ground and place them in the aircraft. The crews sharpen their skills with quarterly mandatory training, such as the two-day session held at Boy Scout Camp Barnhardt in Stanley County. On most days, the HART technicians are working as fire fighters or emergency medical technicians for their city or county.

The NC HART program became the first of its kind in the nation to implement a regimented training and response program that combines the best civilian rescuers with military aviation assets. Five other states – Texas, South Carolina, Maryland, Alabama and Washington – have since modeled their program after North Carolina.

The NC HART teams are usually called upon between 10 and 15 times annually. During strong hurricane seasons the number of rescues can multiply rapidly. Following hurricanes Frances and Ivan in 2004, fast moving water and landslides cut off many roads and escape routes in the mountains trapping hundreds of people. The NC HART teams delivered an estimated 350 citizens to safety that year.

Staff from the following agencies make up the NC HART teams: Asheville Fire/Rescue, Burke County Emergency Services, Cary Fire Dept., Charlotte Fire Dept., Gaston County EMS, Raleigh Fire Dept., Rocky Mount Fire Dept., REDS Team, South Orange Rescue Squad, Transylvania EMS., N.C. Emergency Management, N.C. National Guard and State Highway Patrol.



NC HART Crews load a survivor safely into the helicopter during a two-day training exercise.



Chief Deputy Secretary Rudy Rudisill describes for reporters his experience as a flood survivor during the HART training exercise.

NCEM Staff Changes

N.C. Emergency Management has three new area coordinators. David Weldon is the new coordinator for area two which includes Beaufort, Bertie, Hyde, Martin, Pitt, Tyrell and Washington counties. Weldon was the Catawba County Director of Emergency Services before joining NCEM. Dennis Hancock is the coordinator for area nine which includes Caswell, Davie, Forsyth, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin counties. Hancock was the assistant EM coordinator for Caswell County. Steve Powers left Hazard Mitigation to become the new coordinator for area eight which includes Anson, Chatham, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond and Scotland counties.

Other recent staff changes include:

Angela Thornton - business technology analyst, Geospatial and Technology Management

Tom Langan – engineer, GTM

Rachel Tovey - field planner, Eastern Branch Office

Paulette Erwin - administrative assistant, Public Assistance Section

Kenneth Creque – planner, Hazard Mitigation Section

Patricia Dabbs – office assistant, Homeland Security Section

Weather Awareness Weeks

Severe Weather Awareness Week is Feb. 28 - March 6. The National Weather Service will highlight hazards associated with severe weather including thunderstorms, lighting, tornadoes and flooding.

Flood Awareness Week is March 15 - 19. This awareness initiative will bring attention to the many dangers associated with flood waters.

For more information, see www.floodsafety.noaa.gov or www.nws.noaa.gov/om/severeweather/resources/ttl7-09.pdf

NC Emergency Management Association Holds Spring Conference

The North Carolina Emergency Management Association will hold its Spring 2010 All-Hazards Conference March 14-19 in Sunset Beach. The bi-annual conference provides a way for emergency management personnel across the state to meet together to learn about and discuss the latest emergency management topics.

More than 30 sessions are planned covering a variety of topics including: the process for requesting state resources, tropical weather report, making the EOC a NIM/ICS operation and special needs best practices.

The conference also will include meetings to handle routine association duties.

The following agencies are scheduled to present materials: Federal Emergency Management Agency, North Carolina Emergency Management, N.C. Baptist Men, National Hurricane Center, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and many others.

For more information or to register, visit the NCEMA website at <https://ncema.renci.org>

North Carolina Baptist Men to Hold Training

The N.C. Baptist Men will provide training on mass feeding, recovery, emergency childcare and chaplaincy operations they provide during large scale disaster events. Locations have not yet been determined but the dates are March 5-6 and 19-20, April 16-17 and May 7-8 and 21-22.

Emergency management personnel are welcomed to observe or participate. For more information, contact Mary Mountz at 800-395-5102, ext. 5606 or visit www.ncbaptist.org.



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Questions and Comments can be directed to:

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“In the Business of Saving Lives and Protecting Property”

The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management was formed in 1977 to coordinate the preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities of all agencies for emergency management within North Carolina. It performs this mission by planning, organizing, staffing, equipping, training, testing and activating emergency management programs during times of need.